

- Legislation would Protect Millions of Local Residents -

Washington, DC – Members of Congress Nita Lowey (D-NY18), Maurice Hinchey (D-NY22), Eliot Engel (D-NY17) and John Hall (D-NY19) today introduced legislation that would allow the Secretary of Homeland Security to issue a no-fly zone over Indian Point Nuclear Facility.

Although the proposed FAA airspace redesign does not include routes over Indian Point, it also does not explicitly prohibit such flights, and fails to adequately recognize the security threat the plant poses in such a highly-populated area. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has failed to address the situation, prompting today's legislative action.

"Millions of Americans live and work in the shadows of Indian Point, and we know terrorists have considered nuclear facilities as targets," said Lowey, who serves on the House Homeland Security Committee. "It's unconscionable to allow airplanes anywhere near this facility. The air traffic around Indian Point is absolutely a security risk. Too much is at stake for the Department of Homeland Security to not act immediately."

Congressman John Hall, a member of the House Transportation Subcommittee on Aviation, said that efforts to improve safety around Indian Point must include air traffic. "Public safety must be our foremost concern when it comes to Indian Point," said Hall. "Indian Point operates in the nation's most densely populated corridor with very heavy air travel. Giving the Department of Homeland Security the authority to issue a no-fly zone is a common sense solution to prevent a potential disaster, especially since no other Federal agency has taken up this responsibility."

"There is absolutely no need for the FAA to keep the door open and potentially allow planes to fly directly above Indian Point," Hinchey said. "Even if we just considered the possibility of a plane having an accident it makes no sense to allow flights over a nuclear power plant, but when we factor in the risk of a potential terrorist attack by air against Indian Point it becomes abundantly clear that we need to act now and seal off this area. Allowing the Department of Homeland Security to step in and permanently bar flights from entering the Indian Point area is the right thing to do for the millions of people who live in the area."

Congressman Eliot Engel said, "Indian Point remains the gravest potential threat to the metropolitan area and the 20 million people living there. That is why Rep. Lowey and I asked the FAA to create a no-fly zone around Indian Point last year. One of the terrorist flights that struck us so grievously on 9/11 flew directly over Indian Point on its way to the World Trade Center. Indian Point is too tempting a target for terrorists for us to minimize any potential risk."